

totally with local funds. Completion of this interchange between Interstate 95 and SR 202 is critically needed to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety and capacity.

The State/Local share is 50% of the total project cost; the Jacksonville Transportation Authority is in possession of the required matching funds and is committed to their financial obligation in order to complete the project.

TRIBUTE TO NELL SOTO

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I stand here today to honor a loving mother, adoring grandmother and great-grandmother, passionate lawmaker and cherished friend, Nell Soto.

Working in the citrus groves as a child during the Depression, Nell eventually grew up to become influential and well-respected in the California Legislature. A sixth-generation Pomona resident, her passion for positive change and betterment of the community began early on in her life. Walking precincts as early as 1948 to help elect President Truman, she eventually became a pioneer of Latino political activism during the 1950s and 1960s. Actively involved in supporting the rights of farm workers, she walked the streets of Delano, California with Cesar Chavez. She also played an active role in the anti-war movement of the 1960s, including helping Senator Bobby Kennedy win the California primary. These are only a small sample of the impressive events she was a part of and one of the many reasons as to why she became an inspiring role model to us all.

Nell's fight for change carried on into politics where she helped elect her husband, Phil Soto, to the California Assembly in 1962. Nell herself was first elected to office in 1987 as a Pomona City Councilmember, serving for twelve years and becoming a prominent figure in the community. In 1993, she was appointed to the South Coast Management Quality District board and truly became aware of the growing concern of the environmental hazards that were affecting the community. This is where she first made her true mark as a champion of environmental protection. Concerned by the increasing rise of pollution in the Pomona area, she recognized how this was especially affecting all of the hardworking people in fields. Understanding that they were constantly being exposed to these toxins, she continued to push for greater reform.

Only a year after the death of her husband in 1997, she was elected to the California State Assembly. However, shortly thereafter, she replaced me in the State Senate when I left to become a Congressman in 1998 and then returned to the State Assembly in 2006 after her Senate term limits expired. Bringing her determination to create a better life for the people in her community, she formed a task force in the State Senate to help water districts in Fontana, Rialto and Colton address perchlorate contamination of groundwater, an issue that is very dear to my heart. Nell was instrumental in helping deliver \$20 million in federal funding to the Inland Empire to buy replacement water.

Nell always stood up to fight for the poor, the undeserved, and for the community as a whole. She was a forceful voice for Latinos everywhere, making sure our community and its issues were heard. In addition to believing in the protection of the environment, Nell was also a fierce advocate for issues related to education, housing, public safety and transportation. Always prioritizing children and families at the top of her agenda, she helped establish legislation to create safer school routes for children and get parents more involved in their children's education. In addition, Nell was instrumental in securing 5000 new jobs by helping turn the General Dynamics plant in Pomona into a furniture plant, as well as helping to secure \$22.5 million for the Pomona Metro Link and Transit System. She was also responsible for helping secure \$5 million from the state budget for numerous parks and community centers within her district.

I have always been grateful for Nell's friendship, a woman who has always been an inspiration to my family and I. She always supported me, from the time I entered the Board of Trustees, to when I served in the State Assembly, State Senate and still as I came here to serve as a Member of Congress. I thank her for always making a point of attending one of my events or at least sending a representative if she couldn't come herself. I know I am not alone when I say that I have lost a truly amazing friend, one who will be remembered for her hard work, true commitment to family and tireless efforts to better her community.

I am proud to have known a woman who was so loved by all of her family and friends. Nell is survived by her children, Philip Jr., Michael, Patrick, Anna and Tom, as well as her eleven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

I would like to express my greatest sympathies for her family's loss. Let us take a moment to remember this great woman and her admirable dedication to instilling positive change and leading an exemplary life, one whose footsteps we all hope to follow. The thoughts and prayers of my wife Barbara and children Councilman Joe Baca, Jr., Jeremy, Natalie and Jennifer and I are with her family at this time.

God bless Nell Soto for love of God, country and mankind.

IN HONOR OF JOHN AND JOAN MULLEN

HON. JOE SESTAK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join with the Irish American Business Chamber & Network, proud Irish Americans everywhere and especially the residents of the 7th Congressional District of Pennsylvania in acknowledging the business skills, compassion and philanthropy of John and Joan Mullen.

Every Member of Congress receives considerable correspondence especially when the nation is in difficulty. I have come to appreciate first hand the intelligence and vision of John Mullen. At the peak of the energy crisis he drafted a precise, informative and creative assessment of the causes of the crisis and co-

gent ideas for its resolution. Of the many thousands of letters, phone calls and e-mails, his correspondence remains in a prominent place in my office and I look forward to working with him on the energy crisis and other pressing national matters throughout my tenure in Congress.

I should have expected as much from a man who has served his country in the armed forces, worked his way through college, and had the vision and determination to marry his remarkable wife Joan. Together they have raised four accomplished children: Tim, Jeffery, Matthew, and Janice. Madam Speaker, by dint of hard work, a faith centered life and love for one another, the Mullen family epitomizes all that is right in the United States, Ireland and the world. I ask that at this moment this chamber joins me in wishing John and Joan Mullen continued success, fair winds and following seas for many years to come.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1105, the Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act. This bill completes Congress' work funding essential government services for 2009 and invests in important priorities to get our economy back on track. H.R. 1105 provides for the needs of North Carolina's most vulnerable citizens and will help our State make the investments it needs to make for a brighter future.

As the former superintendent of schools in North Carolina, I am particularly pleased that this bill continues our commitment to educational opportunities for all Americans. Economists tell us that strategic investments in education are one of the best ways to help America become more productive and competitive. This bill builds on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support state and local community efforts to improve schools, and on the efforts of individuals and families to provide a better life for their children. H.R. 1105 provides \$66.5 billion for the Department of Education, a 7 percent increase over last year. In these times when state budgets are stretched to the limit, it increases the federal share of special education costs and increases Title I grants for disadvantaged students to ensure our local communities are able to continue to help our most vulnerable students. It provides increases to student financial aid to help 1.4 million students go to school, and helps 6.9 million families pay for college with an increase in the maximum Pell Grant to \$4,360. It provides additional funding for Head Start, gives child care assistance to 11,000 more children, and provides 1.7 million with quality afterschool services that supplement their school activities. These are fundamental investments that provide the key to the future for our nation's children.

This bill makes many other critical investments to address our immediate needs while laying the foundation for our long-term prosperity. H.R. 1105 provides \$15.3 billion for the Labor Department, providing critical job training, unemployment, and workforce protection